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Human Development Report

Update on Human Development Report consultations

1. In January 2003 during its 57th session, the General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/57/264, in which it invited the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA to include in its annual work plan as from 2003 a separate agenda item on the *Human Development Report* (HDR). The aim of the resolution is to improve the consultation process with Member States regarding the HDR in order to enhance its quality and accuracy without compromising its editorial independence.

2. In line with that resolution, the actions undertaken to improve the quality of consultations with Member States and with the community of human development practitioners at large are detailed below. This narrative covers the thematic consultation that took place to choose the theme of HDR 2006; the informal Executive Board consultations carried on throughout the process of elaboration of HDR 2006; and some specific efforts pertaining statistics to enhance the quality of gender statistics published each year in the report.

3. In 2005, the Human Development Report Office (HDRO) held a special network consultation to choose the theme for HDR 2006. The discussion, launched by the Director of HDRO, was hosted over the course of a month on the UNDP resident representatives' network (RRNet) and the Human Development Report network (HDRNet). The HDRNet is free and open to all Human Development practitioners who wish to join. At present it encompasses a large number of them around the world. A vibrant discussion took place, with interesting contributions. HDRO drew on this resourceful community to help identifying pertinent key issues in 'water and human development: power, entitlements and scarcity', the theme of the 2006 report. In addition, a network discussion was launched on the concept note of the report. The insightful comments received helped frame the content of HDR 2006.

4. During the process of elaboration of HDR 2006, HDRO held five informal consultations with the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA. The first took place on 17 November 2005, focusing on the presentation and discussion of the concept note for the 2006 report. At the second, held on 10 February 2006, the outline of

06-30588 (E) 260406

HDR 2006 was presented and discussed. The third informal consultation, a thematic consultation on statistics, took place on 24 March 2006 and focused on some revisions to the gender-related index published in the report each year; the challenges faced; and strategies to improve the statistical work carried out by the HDRO. The fourth informal consultation will take place on 18 April 2006. It will focus on the final detailed chapter structure, which underwent revisions after consultations within HDRO, with the expert advisory panel on the report, and with the UNDP readers group. The fifth and final informal consultation will cover the main messages of HDR 2006.

5. The consultations so far have been well attended by Executive Board members and observers. Several delegates thanked HDRO for organizing the consultations, which were characterized as very useful. Delegates commended the work undertaken by the HDRO on water, and expressed strong support to the editorial independence of the report. HDRO benefited from constructive comments made by the delegates. Those comments and suggestions have been taken into consideration in preparing HDR 2006.

6. For several years, one of the informal consultations on the HDR has been a thematic consultation on the statistical work of the report. In 2006, the thematic consultation focused on the topic of gender statistics, an area where HDRO has reinforced its efforts. In particular, the office has responded to its mandate as identified in the UNDP corporate gender strategy and action plan, which was adopted by the Executive Board in January 2005. Since 1995, the Human Development Report has published two global composite indexes. The first is the gender-related development index (GDI), which looks at the same dimensions as the human development index but adjusts the achievements by the differences between men and women. The second global composite index is the gender empowerment measure (GEM), which looks at gender differences in participation in economic and political life. As part of the efforts to revisit the GDI and the GEM, HDRO organized a technical workshop in January 2006. The workshop drew on a series of specially commissioned background papers and on the active participation of experts in various thematic areas related to gender measurement. The workshop achieved its objectives. Experts participating in the workshop presented HDRO with an extensive set of recommendations for future work, including the possibility of reformulating the GDI and the GEM in the medium term.

7. HDRO is committed to the preparation of the HDR in a neutral and transparent manner and in full and effective consultation with Member States, with due regard to the use of resources and the impartial nature of the report.